

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF EVENTS AND EXPERIENCES AND WORD-OF-MOUTH MARKETING ON TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN JORDAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to investigate the mediating effect of events and experiences and word-of-mouth marketing on telecommunications companies in Jordan. The study also attempts to determine the role of demographic variables (gender, qualifications, experience, and career level) in mediating the effect of word-of-mouth marketing and events and experiences on the relationship between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness. The researcher used quantitative method and collected the data using the field survey method. Using the quota sample, the researcher divided a study population (Orange, Zain and Umniah) according to the number of employees in companies' branches across 12 governorates in Jordan. The questionnaire was distributed to 540 respondents comprising of marketing managers, sales managers, and information systems and coordinators. A total of 308 sets of questionnaires returned were valid for the analysis, a response rate of 57%. The findings showed that there is a mediating effect of IMC on the relationship between marketing effectiveness and consumer trends due to the word-of-mouth marketing and events and experiences as important dimensions of integrated marketing communications in the Jordanian marketing environment.

KEYWORDS: *Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), Word-of-Mouth Marketing, Events and Experiences, Consumer Trends, Marketing Effectiveness, Telecommunications Companies & Jordan*

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing development has become a more important aspect and detailed interference in marketing communication, which is the transfer of an idea or information or meaning in a message from the sender to the receiver through a communication channel and varies according to a position (Helm, 2009). A modern trend in the management of marketing is the tendency to focus on a specialized organizational unit of marketing communication (Aaker & Mc Loughlin, 2009), tracking Marketing Manager that, regardless of the regulation authority, included special sub-units: word-of-mouth marketing, sales promotion, events and experiences, advertising, publicity and public relations, direct and interactive marketing, and personal selling (Kotler & Keller, 2012). In this paper, the researcher addressed two important dimensions: events and experiences and word-of-mouth marketing. Word-of-mouth Marketing: As the name implies, this included people-to-people communication in either oral, written, or electronic form which relates to the advantages or experiences of buying or using goods

or services (Keller K. L., 2009). Similarly, according to Rosen (2002), word-of-mouth marketing is an oral or written recommendation that is a satisfied consumer gives to the potential consumers of a service or a product. Considered as the most efficient type of promotion, it is referred to as word-of-mouth advertising as well. However, this is not correct, because by definition, advertising is paid for and non-personal communication (Sanger, 2013).

In addition, events and experiences: This type of marketing is a way of becoming involved in special and more personally relevant moments in the lives of the customers. Events could get broader and deeper than the correlation between the sponsor and its target market, but only in the case where it is suitably managed (Hill, O'Sullivan, & O'Sullivan, 2012). Company-sponsored activities and programmes are designed for creating daily or special brand-related interactions with the customers, and include entertainment, sports, art, and cause events, in addition to less formal activities as well (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Accordingly, this research seeks to determine the mediating effect of word-of-mouth marketing, events and experiences on the relationship between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness in Jordanian telecommunication companies.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Through a review of the previous literature, including books and scientific journals that touch on this subject, the researcher found many studies on the subject of IMC, while in other studies on consumer trends; the focus is on marketing effectiveness. The researcher did not find any study on the issues faced the companies under study in regards to events and experiences and word-of-mouth marketing as two main dimensions of IMC.

Therefore through this study the researcher intends to discover the philosophy of applied by Jordanian telecommunications companies in determining their market priorities and determining the wants and needs of the customer when developing marketing plans. Several questions arise from this as follows: Will these companies implement these plans effectively? Will these companies have innovative plans to overcome the economic challenges facing customers in Jordan under the high taxes imposed by the Jordanian government that may become an economic burden on the customers' social and economic life? Will these plans help growth and long-term profitability? Will these companies have employees capable of market analysis, planning, implementation, and control, in order to reflect consumer trends?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the current study are as follows:

- To determine the effectiveness of events and experiences and word-of-mouth marketing of integrated marketing communications in influencing consumer trends.
- To determine the extent to which the elements of integrated marketing communications are linked to marketing effectiveness.
- To determine the relationship between each element of marketing effectiveness with consumer trends.
- To determine whether demographic variables (gender, educational level, experience, and management level) play a role in the mediating effect of integrated marketing communications and on the relationship between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness; and
- To come up with a set of recommendations based on the results of the study that could help decision-makers in

the telecommunication companies under study to excel through optimum utilization of integrated marketing communications.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- Do integrated marketing communications mediate the relationship between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness in telecommunications companies operating in Jordan?

This question has two sub-questions:

- What is the mediating effect of events and experiences on the relationship between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness?
- What is the mediating effect of word-of-mouth marketing on the relationship between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- The study is important because it addresses an important topic in marketing, namely, the mediating effect of events and experiences and word-of-mouth marketing on the relationship between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness in telecommunication companies operating in Jordan.
- It attempts to highlight the nature and reality of the close relationship between the main variables of the study.
- It seeks to achieve consistency, intellectuality and practicality blended among these main variables. In addition, it tries to explain their effect on each other.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection Methods

The current research used each of primary and secondary data. The secondary data has been obtained via a review of previous studies related to the subject of interest. The primary data was collected via a questionnaire distributed to marketing managers, sales and information systems managers and sales coordinators.

In order to gather data to answer the questions of the research, the developed questionnaire consisted of four parts. The first part was designed to collect demographic data, specifically gender, qualifications, overall experience, age group, job title, years of experience and management level. The second part covered the dimensions of IMC and included two indicators, which were adopted from Kotler and Keller (2012), and Tanner and Raymond (2012), namely, events and experiences, and word-of-mouth marketing. The third and fourth parts of the questionnaire covered the indicators that were used to measure the relationship between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness and drew on the work of Appiah-Adu et al. (2001) and Wu (2003).

Kotler's well-known model to measure marketing effectiveness, which was published in the Harvard Business Review in 1977, has been adopted by many studies and companies (Appiah-Adu, Fyall, & Singh, Marketing effectiveness and business performance in the financial services industry, 2001). The scale in his model consists of five main dimensions: customer philosophy, strategic orientation, sufficient marketing information, operational efficiency, and

integrated marketing organization.

Study Population and Selection of the Study Sample

The study population consisted of all telecommunications companies in Jordan. This entire population consisted of three companies (Orange, Zain, and Umniah) (MOICT, 2016) as shown in table 1.

Table 1: The Study Population

Governorate	Amman	Balqa	Zarqa	Madaba	Irbid	Jeresh	Ajloun	Mafrq	Maan	Aqaba	Tafleh	Karak	Total
Orange Company													
No. of Branches	30	4	4	1	7	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	56
Zain Company													
No. of Branches	33	2	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	50
Umniah Company													
No. of Branches	29	2	4	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	48

Selection of the Study Sample

The researcher divides a study population (Orange, Zain, and Umniah) according to the number of employees in companies' branches across 12 governorates in Jordan, as the shown in table 2: (MOICT, 2016)

Table 2: The selected Sample of the Study Population

Company	Number of Branches	Number of employees	Weightage = 7.3
Orange	56	2136	293
Zain	50	1154	158
Umniah	48	650	89
Total	154	3940	540 (sample size)

The researcher distributed questionnaires to marketing managers, sales and information systems managers and sales coordinators for branches in each province. Accordingly, 540 questionnaires were distributed as in the following table:

Table 3: Number of distributed Questionnaires in each Governorate

	Number of distributed Questionnaires in each Governorate												Total
Company	Amman	Balqa	Zarqa	Madaba	Irbid	Jeresh	Ajloun	Mafrq	Maan	Aqaba	Tafleh	Karak	12
Orange	159	21	21	5	36	6	5	5	10	5	5	15	293
Zain	104	6	10	3	10	3	3	4	3	3	3	6	158
Umniah	54	4	7	2	9	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	89

Table 4 includes a summary of the demographics of the study respondents.

Table 4: The Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Type of respondent	Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	194	63.0	63.0	63.0
	Female	114	37.0	37.0	100
	Total	308	100	100	
Age	Less than 25 years old	96	31.2	31.2	31.2
	More than 25 years old	212	68.8	68.8	
	Total	308	100	100	100
Company Preference	Orange	113	36.7	36.7	36.7
	Zain	89	28.9	28.9	65.6
	Umniah	106	34.4	34.4	100
Experience	Less than 5 years	98	31.8	31.8	31.8
	More than 5 years	210	68.2	68.2	
	Total	308	100	100	100

Research Instrument

In this work, the research instrument was a questionnaire. Which has been designed to collect data on the use of IMC and consumer trends in telecommunications companies in Jordan. The questions were formulated in order to obtain information on IMC and on the relationship between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness. The respondents have been asked to answer the statements in the questionnaire by using a five-point Likert-scale, which ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree, where strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, undecided = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. This scale was used to reflect the level of agreement among respondents about the statements presented in the questionnaire. The study sample and the target group were made familiar with the research's nature and its purpose. They were also informed that all the information collected from them would be handled in strict confidence. The researcher also made it known that the companies under study would receive the results of the research, together with some recommendations that may be of benefit to them, if they wished to do so. As the study aimed to cover 12 governorates in Jordan, the researcher hired assistants to distribute the questionnaire in the areas of southern Jordan, which was more than 400 km distant from the researcher's location.

Reliability and Validity

Table 5 shows the reliability descriptive statistics for the questionnaire items.

Table 5: Summary of Reliability Test (n = 308)

Variable Name	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
IMC	0.93	Excellent
Events and experiences	0.702	Acceptable
Word-of-mouth marketing	0.816	Good
Marketing effectiveness	0.918	Excellent
Customer philosophy	0.707	Acceptable
Operational effectiveness	0.723	Acceptable
Tactical orientation	0.705	Acceptable
Sufficient marketing information	0.714	Acceptable
Integrated marketing organization	0.720	Acceptable
Consumer trends	0.90	Excellent
Overall Reliability	0.97	Excellent

Table 6 shows the validity test for the whole sample.

Table 6: Validity Test for the whole samples (Factors Analysis)

Variables	E&E	WOM	CP	OE	S. O	IMO	AMI	CT
Validity	.9320	.9323	0.8934	0.890025	0.888025	0.765425	0.71085	0.914575

FINDING AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Gender

Table 7 proves that the percentage of male respondents in the current study was 63% and the percentage of female respondents was 37%. These percentages indicate that male participation in the study was higher and this could be because of the nature of the work in the Jordanian telecommunications sector which can involve travelling long distances and working for long periods, characteristics that do not fit with the majority of working women's domestic responsibilities.

Table 7: Gender of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	194	63.0
	Female	114	37.0
	Total	308	100.0

Education Level

As for the distribution of the respondents of the research based on educational level, Table 8 shows that 46% of the study population held a bachelor's degree, 25% had a diploma and 21% had a secondary school certificate or lower. Also, the percentage of respondents who had a M. Sc. degree is 7% and the ones who were with a PhD degree 1%, indicating that the majority of the respondents had tertiary-level qualifications.

Table 8: Education Level of the Respondents

		Frequency	%	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Secondary and below	65	21.1	21.1
	Diploma	77	25.0	46.1
	Bachelor's	141	45.8	91.9
	Master's	22	7.1	99.0
	PhD	3	1.0	100.0
	Total	308	100.0	

Working Experience

Table 9 exhibits the distribution of the respondents of the study according to working experience in their current jobs. It shows that 0.3% of the respondents had working experience equal to or longer than 20 years and 3.9% had experience ranging from 15 to less than 20 years. Those with experience ranging from 10 to less than 15 years accounted for 28.6% of the study sample. However, the highest percentage of respondents (35.4%) had experience ranging from 5 to less than 10 years. In addition, 31.8% had less than 5 years of experience in their current position. Overall, the respondents had a relatively good length of working experience in their current roles.

Table 9: Working Experience of the Respondents in their Current Job.

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 5 years	98	31.8	31.8
	From 5 years to less than 10 years	109	35.4	67.2
	From 10 years to less than 15 years	88	28.6	95.8
	From 15 years to less than 20 years	12	3.9	99.7
	20 years and over	1	.3	100.0
	Total	308	100.0	

Management Level

As for the distribution of the respondents of the research on the basis of their management level, Table 10 indicates that 2.6% of them were in the top management level in positions such as general manager or administrative and financial manager and other similar roles. A substantial proportion of the respondents (36.7%) were in the middle management level with jobs such as marketing manager, sales manager, operations manager, branch manager and so on. However, the largest proportion of respondents (60.7%) were in the low management level, working as supervisors in sales, promotions, marketing, quality, and follow-up, and as sales and marketing representatives among others.

Table 10: Management Level of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Top management	8	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Middle management	113	36.7	36.7	39.3
	Low management	187	60.7	60.7	100.0
	Total	308	100.0	100.0	

Job Title

As for the distribution of the respondents of the research based on the job title, Table 11 shows that 26.3% of the study population were marketing managers, 24.7% were sales managers and 12% were operations managers. On the other hand, 23.4% were quality managers and 13.6% were in the others category which included job titles such as sales coordinator.

Table 11: Job Title of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Marketing manager	81	26.3	26.3
	Sales manager	76	24.7	51.0
	Operation manager	37	12.0	63.0
	Quality manager	72	23.4	86.4
	Others	42	13.6	100.0
	Total	308	100.0	

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics have been utilized to assess whether the respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements in the study questionnaire and whether there was a relationship between demographic and non-demographic influences with impacts of consumer trends brought by the success of marketing effectiveness. The mean, median, and standard deviation scores for each question in the study tool are presented in the following and thereby reveal the key determinants of consumer trends among telecommunications companies in Jordan.

Integrated Marketing Communications

Table 12 lists mean, median, and standard deviation for the seven dimensions of IMC as a mediating variable based on the respondents' responses to the statements in the questionnaire.

Table 12: The Dimensions of Integrated Marketing Communications

Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
IMC	3.68	3.67	.611
Events and experiences	3.43	3.50	.806
Word-of-mouth marketing	3.92	4.00	.700

The means, medians, and standard deviations for the statements about the elements of IMC were calculated in SPSS. From Table 12 it can be seen that IMC received a high degree of approval at a mean of 3.68 with a standard deviation of 0.611. This indicates the importance of using IMC in the companies under study. word-of-mouth marketing achieved the highest means of 3.92 and highest standard deviations of 0.7, respectively, indicating the importance of using integrated marketing information in writing reports and marketing plans. The values of the standard deviations in Table 12 indicate that there's not much variation in the responses across the sample.

Events and Experiences

Table 13 lists the means, medians, and standard deviations of the statements about events and experiences, which is also one of the IMC dimensions.

Table 13: The Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Events and Experiences

	Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
11	An event marketing campaign gives value to attendees beyond the information concerning a service or a product.	3.68	4.00	1.063
12	The company's participation in competitions and events increases the clients' interest in the services.	3.66	4.00	.977
13	Sponsorship of a particular event and offering free services help to achieve consumer satisfaction.	3.37	4.00	1.098
14	Discounts, free samples, charity alignment, or fun events will give consumers the feeling that they are getting benefits and not merely joining a live-action commercial.	3.00	3.00	1.275
	Events and experiences	3.43	3.50	.806

Table 13 shows that events and experiences received a medium degree of approval at a mean of 3.43 with a standard deviation of 0.806. This indicates the importance of this dimension as a part of IMC in the companies under study. Consumers today are looking for specific products or services, so events facilitate face-to-face discussion between a company and consumers, helping consumers to establish a much more personal and intimate relationship with brands (Cova & Pace, Brand community of convenience products: new forms of customer empowerment—the case “my Nutella The Community”, 2006), as well as giving customers unique and memorable experiences associated with the company's business (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In addition, the value of services is increased by providing speakers, networking opportunities and more for clients (Maister, 2012). Statements (11) and (12) received the biggest average mean scores of 3.68 and 3.66 with standard deviations of 1.063 and 0.977, respectively, which indicates the importance of event marketing campaigns that provide value to attendees beyond the provision of information about the services provided by the companies. The results also show that a company's participation in competitions and events increases consumers' interest in the company's services, and this point is related to experiences and understanding the wants and needs of customers (Gounaris, 2005) in addition to how to focus on creating value, not just selling. It is important to create an event that consumers actually want to attend and feel they are getting something positive out of it (Smilansky, 2017). The standard deviations in Table 13 indicate that there is little variation in the responses of the sample regarding this issue.

Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Table 14 lists the means, medians, and standard deviations of the statements regarding word-of-mouth marketing, which is one of the dimensions IMC.

Table 14: The Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Word-of-Mouth Marketing

	Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
23				
24	People depend on word of mouth when making purchasing decisions.	3.90	4.00	.828
25	Social media users are helpful in building a more trusted brand which makes consumers satisfied with services.	3.89	4.00	.886
26	Oral messages from previous consumers are a more efficient and effective means of promoting services.	3.98	4.00	.890
	Word-of-mouth marketing	3.92	4.00	.700

Table 14 shows that word-of-mouth marketing received a high degree of approval at an average of 3.92 with a standard deviation of 0.7. According to Litvin, Goldsmith, and Pan (2008), word of mouth is a free type of advertising or promotion (which is one of the reasons why it is of this importance). It comprises an opinion that is shared by a customer and triggered by an event the customer experiences (Jeong & Jang, 2011) that goes beyond what he/she expected. This phenomenon indicates that customers trust their friends (Chu & Kim, Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites, 2011). This is the reason word-of-mouth marketing is the most important marketing source (Ferguson, 2008). According to Nielsen's research, 92% of customers trust recommendations from friends and relatives more than advertising, and this statistic strongly bolsters the word of mouth use case (Baek, 2010). Statements (26) and (23) received the highest average mean scores of 3.98 and 3.92 with standard deviations of 0.890 and 0.882, respectively, which indicates that oral messages from previous consumers are more efficient and effective in promoting the services and products in the companies under study and that consumers prefers to find out about services and products from previous consumers. This finding supports that in Argo, Dahl, and Morales (2006) who found investigated the way customers react to goods that have been experienced by others).

Marketing Effectiveness

The second part of the study tool measured marketing effectiveness, which consists of the dimensions of customer philosophy, tactical orientation, integrated marketing organization, sufficient marketing information, and operational efficiency. Table 15 includes the mean, median, and standard deviation for all five dimensions of this independent variable.

Table 15: The Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Marketing Effectiveness

Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
Customer philosophy	3.67	3.80	.771
Operational efficiency	3.40	3.50	.854
Tactical orientation	3.39	3.50	.825
Integrated marketing organization	3.38	3.50	.890
Sufficient marketing information	3.10	3.00	1.027

Table 15 illustrates that marketing effectiveness received a medium degree of approval at a mean of 3.42 with a standard deviation of 0.738. This indicates the importance of focusing on marketing effectiveness as an important tool to influence consumer trends in the companies under study. Customer philosophy and operational efficiency had the highest means of 3.67 and 3.4 with standard deviations of 0.771 and 0.854, respectively, which implies that the companies under study take account of the needs and wants of customers when developing marketing plans. The values of the standard deviations in Table 15 indicate that there is no considerable variation in the responses of the sample.

Customer Philosophy

Table 16 includes the means, medians, and standard deviations of the statements about customer philosophy, one of the marketing effectiveness dimensions.

Table 16: The Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Customer Philosophy

	Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
47	Your company keen to know the market priorities and to determine the needs and wants of the customer.	3.70	4.00	1.113
48	The company considers the needs and wants of consumers when formulating its plans.	3.68	4.00	1.226
49	The company works to develop effective plans that are compatible with customer philosophy.	3.69	4.00	1.075
50	The company considers the needs of customers in line with the developments in the marketing environment.	3.75	4.00	1.000
51	Your company tries to deliver a consistent message to the consumer through its marketing communications.	3.54	4.00	1.248
	Customer philosophy	3.67	3.80	.771

Table 16 shows that customer philosophy received a high degree of approval at a mean of 3.67 with a standard deviation of 0.771. The results show that customer philosophy influences consumer behaviour. According to Vargo, Maglio, and Akaka (2008), a philosophy is more than values; values are what flow from it. Also, a philosophy provides a coherent story to understand where those values come from and a solid foundation upon which to base behaviour (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Many studies have demonstrated that a strong service philosophy gives the power to company's frontline employees to make the right decisions (Macintosh, 2007). This gives a company's service more speed and flexibility. In addition, some considerable philosophic metaphors, concepts, and paradigms, have been presented earlier by Bristol (1985) for illustrating the reason and way various research methods are essential in customer behaviour. According to Solomon, Russell-Bennett, and Previte, (2012), a crucial philosophic dimension guiding customer behaviour inquiry is related to the viewpoint that has been adopted by a researcher according to the determinants or causes of customer behaviour. As statements (50) and (47) received the highest average mean scores of 3.75 and 3.70 with standard deviations of 1.00 and 1.113, respectively, this indicates that the telecommunications companies in Jordan take account of the requirements and wants of customers in line with the developments in the marketing environment. Also, the companies under study are keen to know the market priorities and to determine the wants and needs of the customer. This finding is consistent with Akroush and Al-Mohammad (2010).

Operational Efficiency

Table 17 lists the means, medians, and standard deviation values of the statements regarding operational efficiency, which is another dimension of marketing effectiveness.

Table 17: The Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Operational Efficiency

	Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
52	The company implements marketing plans effectively.	3.53	4.00	1.060
53	The company employs a specialized team to follow up and implement marketing plans.	3.69	4.00	1.049
54	The company monitors the results of marketing plans.	3.39	4.00	1.160
55	The company seeks to improve operational efficiency as an element of marketing effectiveness.	3.00	3.00	1.332
	Operational efficiency	3.40	3.50	.854

Table 17 shows that operational efficiency received a medium degree of approval at a mean of 3.40 with a standard deviation of 0.854. This result agrees with that of Daily and Huang (2001), who found that operational excellence, includes making continuous enhancements to a firm, for the sake of achieving a competitive benefit. For accomplishing this, firms maximize value for the customer in addition to their own financial benefit (Jensen, 2010). Their also study shows that in such a scenario employees have the information and authorization of solving issues that affect the business channels where they operate. As statements (53) and (52) received the maximum average mean scores of 3.69 and 3.53 with standard deviations of 1.049 and 1.060, respectively, this indicates that the telecommunications companies in Jordan employ a specialized team to follow up and implement marketing plans and also implement these plans effectively. This finding is consistent with Zamil (2011).

Strategic Orientation

Table 18 lists the means, medians, and standard deviation values of the statements about strategic orientation, another dimension of marketing effectiveness.

Table 18: The Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Strategic Orientation

	Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
56	The company creates a specific way to develop marketing strategies.	3.70	4.00	1.056
57	The company develops marketing strategies based on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis.	3.57	4.00	1.141
58	Your company generates realistic alternatives and gives priority to marketing strategies.	3.31	3.00	1.002
59	The company creates new tactics and plans for long-term profitability and growth.	2.95	3.00	1.308
	Strategic orientation	3.39	3.50	.825

Table 18 shows that strategic orientation received a medium degree of approval at a mean of 3.39 with a standard deviation of 0.825. This result shows that the most significant entity should be the customers whom the marketers market to and who ultimately give the organization their profits (van Raaij, Vernooij, & van Triest, 2003). This is why, the principal direction which is followed in marketing is customer or market orientations (Urde, Baumgarth, & Merrilees, 2013). It is clear from the foregoing that the strategic orientation in the companies under study is aimed at developing marketing strategies that positively affect consumer trends. As statements (56) and (57) received the maximum average mean scores of 3.70 and 3.57 with standard deviations of 1.056 and 1.141, respectively, this shows that the telecommunications companies in Jordan care about creating a specific way to develop marketing strategies. They are also keen to develop marketing strategies based on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis. This is finding is consistent with Chan (2011) and Freng Svendsen, Haugland, Gronhaug, and Hammervoll (2011).

Integrated Marketing Organization

Table 19 lists the means, medians, and standard deviation values of the statements regarding integrated marketing organization, a further dimension of marketing effectiveness.

Table 19: The Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Integrated Marketing Organization.

	Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
60	The company is keen to generate a unified and smooth experience for customers to communicate with the brand/enterprise.	3.56	4.00	1.112
61	The company employs a staff capable of market analysis, planning, implementation, and control.	3.27	4.00	1.145
62	The company uses marketing communications to enhance the planning.	3.73	4.00	1.182
63	The company uses marketing communications to enhance business competitiveness.	2.97	3.00	1.395
	Integrated marketing organization	3.38	3.50	.890

Table 19 shows that integrated marketing organization received a medium degree of approval at a mean of 3.38 with a standard deviation of 0.890. The responses to the statements about this dimension confirm the existence of an organizational integrated marketing message that is directed towards the customer among the companies under study. The companies under study also have a team that has the ability to analyse the market and follow up on marketing plans and control. The follow-up of customers according to their direction and behaviour enhances competitive advantage and highlights the marketing effectiveness of the telecommunications companies under study. As statements (62) and (60) received the maximum average mean scores of 3.73 and 3.56 with standard deviations of 1.182 and 1.121, respectively, this shows that the telecommunications companies in Jordan use marketing communications to enhance their marketing planning and that they are keen to produce a smooth and unified experience for customers to communicate with their services. This finding is in agreement with Kumar (2010).

Adequate Marketing Information

Table 20 lists the means, medians, and standard deviation values of the statements about adequate marketing information, the fifth and final dimension of marketing effectiveness considered in the current study.

Table 20: The Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Adequate Marketing Information.

	Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
64	The company uses the results of marketing research to plan future marketing.	2.82	3.00	1.299
65	The company uses the results of marketing research to plan product development activities.	2.72	2.00	1.350
66	The company has a multi-source system for collecting data.	3.77	4.00	1.195
67	The company looks for sufficient information and quality to perform effective marketing.	2.82	3.00	1.299
	Adequate marketing information	3.10	3.00	1.027

Table 20 shows that adequate marketing information received a medium degree of approval at a mean of 3.10 with a standard deviation of 1.027. According to Zikmund, Babin, Carr, and Griffin (2013), adequate marketing information is derived from the results of marketing study and is utilized for planning future activities of marketing or product development. The information could be obtained from one source or via a collection system. As listed in Table 20,

statement (66) received the highest average mean score of 3.77 with a standard deviation of 1.195, which indicates that the telecommunications companies in Jordan have a multi-source system for collecting data. This finding agrees with (Baker, Harris, Pacurari, and Kawai (2007). However, the rest of the statements about adequate marketing information have a moderate degree of approval in terms of using the findings of marketing study to plan and develop future marketing activities and searching for sufficient information and quality to perform effective marketing. This is consistent with the research gap that is addressed by Radman (2005).

Consumer Trends

The third part of the study tool has been designed for measuring consumer trends. Table 21 includes the means, medians, and standard deviation values for statements associated with this dependent variable.

Table 21: The Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Consumer Trends

	Statement	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
31	Marketing staff focus on enriching the cognitive element of consumers about the company's services.	3.80	4.00	.955
32	The sales staff work to deliver a clear message about services offered to the consumer.	3.73	4.00	.917
33	The consumer is influenced by advertising campaigns if they carry a meaningful message, and then they engage in the service.	3.84	4.00	1.028
34	The consumer's sentiment is positive if he/she realizes that his/her conduct compatibility property holds service.	3.67	4.00	1.071
35	The consumer tends to have positive feelings about the company if it provides distinctive products and services.	4.10	4.00	.767
36	The consumer believes in strong competition among telecommunications companies.	4.19	4.00	.807
37	The consumer takes into account the trade-off between the services provided by companies.	3.75	4.00	1.011
38	Your company provides privacy for the consumer when he/she engages in the service.	3.98	4.00	.913
39	There is a communication between the company and consumer when he/she asks about any new service.	3.95	4.00	.936
40	The consumer has confidence in the quality of the provided services.	3.80	4.00	.958
41	The company works to develop effective plans that are compatible with the client's philosophy in consumer style.	3.94	4.00	.915
42	The company is interested in the views and suggestions of the consumer before and after service engaged.	3.90	4.00	.966
43	The strategy of the company is geared towards consumers in order to continue providing services to them.	3.89	4.00	.879
44	Providing marketing information and employ the effective marketing in influencing consumer behaviour.	3.75	4.00	.912
45	Your company has the elements to be an integrated marketing communication organization.	3.85	4.00	.967
46	Your company tries to deliver a consistent message to the consumer through its marketing communications.	3.93	4.00	.905
	Consumer Trends	3.88	3.91	.584

Table 21 shows that consumer trends received a high degree of approval at a mean of 3.88 with a standard deviation of 0.584. The companies under study focus on how to keep up with consumer trends. For these telecommunications companies staying ahead of the competition is not just about winning new clients; it is about survival. They understand that predicting the future will help their clients to stay ahead of the curve. This finding agrees with

Heinonen (2011). Marketing and sales staff focus on enriching the cognitive element among consumers about the services their company provides, which is in line with Tsai 2005. They also work to deliver a clear message about the services they offer to the consumer. This finding supports Korczynski, Shire, Frenkel, and Tam (2000). Moreover, the responses to the statements about consumer trends indicate that the consumer is influenced by advertising campaigns if they carry a meaningful message, and then they engage in the service. In addition, Table 21 shows that the consumer sentiment is positive if he/she realized that his/her conduct compatibility property holds service. Moreover, the telecommunications companies under study provide privacy for the consumer when he/she is using the service. As statements (36), (35), (38), and (39) received the highest average mean scores of 4.19, 4.10, 3.98, and 3.95 with standard deviations of 0.807, 0.767, 0.913, and 0.936, respectively, this shows that the telecommunications companies in Jordan realize that the consumer believes in strong competition among the companies that provide telecommunication services. They also know that consumers have positive feelings about a company if it provides them with distinctive products and services. The results also indicate that the companies must provide privacy for the consumer when he/she subscribes to the service. In addition, the results in Table 21 show that there is communication between the company and consumer when he/she asks about any new service. The results in Table 21 are compatible with Bauer, Reichardt, Barnes, and Neumann (2005).

Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 22 represents the regression model summary, Table 23 shows the ANOVA test, and Table 24 shows all dependent variables were statistically significant ($\alpha = 0.01$). In the current study, multiple regression analyses have been conducted for examining the mediating effect of word-of-mouth marketing and events and experiences of IMC on the relationship between marketing effectiveness and consumer trends.

Table 22: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.932 ^a	.868	.863	.217	.868	161.482	12	295	.000

a Predictors: (Constant), customer philosophy, adequate marketing information, events and experiences, integrated marketing organization, operational efficiency, strategic orientation, word-of-mouth marketing

Table 23: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.868	12	7.572	161.482	.000 ^a
	Residual	13.833	295	.047		
	Total	104.701	307			

a. Predictors: (Constant), customer philosophy, adequate marketing information, events and experiences, integrated marketing organization, operational efficiency, strategic orientation, word-of-mouth marketing

b. Dependent variable: Consumer trends

Table 24: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.477	.086		5.520	.000		
	Customer philosophy	.054	.024	.071	2.283	.023	.458	2.185
	Operational efficiency	.008	.030	.011	.255	.799	.227	4.406
	Strategic orientation	-.011	.032	-.016	-.354	.724	.225	4.451
	Integrated marketing organization	.083	.025	.127	3.351	.001	.311	3.217
	Adequate marketing information	-.033	.022	-.058	-1.497	.135	.303	3.298
	Events and experience	-.013	.032	-.018	-.406	.685	.237	4.223
	Word-of-mouth marketing	.205	.038	.246	5.465	.000	.222	4.513

a Dependent variable: Consumer trends

The Multiple Regression Model

$$Y = 0.477 + 0.054 CP + 0.008 OE + -0.011 SO + 0.083 IM + -0.033 AM + 0.209 EE + 0.205 WM$$

Where:

OE: Operational efficiency

SO: Strategic orientation

CP: Customer philosophy

IM: Integrated marketing organization

EE: Events and experiences

WM: Word-of-Mouth Marketing

AM: Adequate marketing information

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RQ1: Does Integrated Marketing Communications Mediate the Relationship between Consumer Trends and Marketing Effectiveness in Telecommunications Companies Operating in Jordan?

“According to the results of our analysis of the data in order to test hypothesis 1, there is a relationship with a direct effect of a statistically significant correlation between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness due to the mediating effect of IMC. This shows the consistent message that Jordanian telecommunications companies are delivering via their effective marketing to the consumer.”

The fertile marketing environment in Jordan has made it possible for Jordanian telecommunications companies to enter into robust competition with their counterparts (Karshenas, Moghadam, & Chamlou, 2016). For example, Orange has worked through its ongoing public and private sector promotions, both government and private, to attract the largest segment by employing Porter strategies at the lowest cost and highest quality compared to its competitors

(Casadesus-Masanell & Ricart, 2010). The researcher, as one of the company's consumers, has personal experience of this. On the other hand, Orange's competitors Umniah and Zain have provided good services at a cost to suit their business customers, which has helped them to win the loyalty of those customers."

RO2: What is the Mediating effect of Events and Experiences on the Relationship between Consumer trends and Marketing Effectiveness?

"Numerous companies are still not sure if events can effectively impact marketing results and, most importantly, the way they might be able to do so (Zarantonello & Schmitt, The impact of event marketing on brand equity: The mediating roles of brand experience and brand attitude, 2013). Event marketing is considered to be important in creating awareness about brand and corporate images, but less is known concerning its capability of communicating a better, specific message or plays a role to other brand equity aspects (Gupta, 2003). Event practitioners keep emphasizing that events could produce a connection with customers which is deeper and more meaningful and can thereby provide better brand equity than via indirect, broad-based mass media (Zuboff & Maxmin, 2004). Communication via events is involved with promotional activities that are designed for communicating with attendees and adding more value to the consumer's experience; events give the possibility of facilitating the engagement of consumers with a firm, its brands, and the community (Payne, Storbacka, Frow, & Knox, 2009). Events produce a social setting for people attending them and help raise the level of their involvement; this is why, those attendees tend to have more receptiveness to marketing messages and images that are associated with that event than they are to these ones that are presented by other approaches (Close, Finney, Lacey, & Sneath, 2006). Events offer a channel to actively exchange information; thus, companies that are considering sponsorships and activities of event marketing shouldn't avoid events even in that case where the attendees are not familiar with their goods before the event. Researchers still yet to obtain a better knowledge of the way sponsored events signal corporate community involvement to customers (Damster & Tassiopoulos, 2005). Based on the results of this study, Jordanian telecommunications companies are keen to run event marketing campaigns that provide value to attendees which is more than giving them information concerning a service or a product. The companies' participation in competitions and events has increased consumer interest in their services, and Jordanian companies have been working to provide marketing patronage those results in consumer satisfaction. Indeed, the researcher has witnessed such events on both formal and informal occasions. Moreover, the companies have offered actual discounts to consumers, as well as promotional offers, samples, charity alignment, and fun events that make consumers get the feeling of benefitting and not merely witnessing a live-action commercial. Thus it can be said that the mediating effect of IMC through events and experiences directly impacts the marketing effectiveness success, which reflects positively on consumer trends and consumers choosing to engage in the services provided by Jordanian telecommunications companies."

RO3: What is the Mediating Effect of Word-of-Mouth Marketing on the Relationship between Consumer Trends and Marketing Effectiveness?

"According to Chu and Kim (2011) word-of-mouth marketing is any instance where consumers share information about a product or organization with one another, whether by talking or through some other medium. Internet communication, especially social networking, is a significant part of modern word-of-mouth marketing (Reza Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Any company that can encourage people to spread information about a product, a cause, or the organization itself can use word-of-mouth marketing (Berger J., 2014). This form of marketing is useful in for-profit endeavours as well as in non-profit causes like political campaigns (Coco, 2014)."

“The data analysis conducted for the current study showed that Jordanian telecommunications companies do not rely heavily on word-of-mouth- marketing for their services and products due to the small number of competing companies offering the same product in Jordan. However, word-of-mouth marketing is used by consumers when they explain their experience of some promotional offers to other consumers. Through interviewing a sample of consumers, the researcher found that consumers prefer to find out about services and products from previous consumers. In addition, the analysis of the survey responses received from the companies under study showed that people depend on word of mouth during the process of making a purchasing decision. In addition, social media users are helping to build a more trusted brand, which makes consumer satisfied with services. Moreover, telecommunications companies in Jordan are sure that oral messages from previous consumers are a more efficient and effective means of promoting services. In light of the above, it is clear that there is a mediating effect of IMC through word-of-mouth marketing on the relationship between marketing effectiveness and consumer trends.”

Discussion of the Results

The study proved that the companies under study are keen to identify market priorities and to determine customers’ needs and wants. This result is due to the companies’ ability to implement, follow up, and control their marketing plans effectively. According to Reid (2005), this ability is based on the effect of the IMC components.

The companies under study are able to employ a marketing team through their IMC system. This team works to lead strategic plans efficiently. Among the elements of IMC adopted by these companies, advertising, public relations and publicity, word-of-mouth marketing, and sales promotion are the most influential in terms of marketing effectiveness, especially in light of the economic challenges facing Jordanian consumers and their consequent weak purchasing power. This finding agrees with Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan, and McDonald (2005) and ELSamen and Alshurideh (2012).

As regards the results for they showed the significant positive correlation between customer philosophy and consumer trends in telecommunications companies in Jordan. This result is due to the companies paying attention to customers’ wants and needs when developing their marketing plans in line with customer trends. In light of the developments in the Jordanian marketing environment and the economic challenges facing the consumer after the Jordanian government contributed to increasing the burden on consumers through the imposition of taxes and higher prices for basic consumer goods, the companies under study have been keen to employ the marketing tools that best serve their marketing systems.

However, whereas the current research showed the strong correlation between IMC and operational efficiency, it found no relationship between operational efficiency and consumer trends based on the statistical tests conducted by the researcher. This is due to the fact that telecommunications companies in Jordan are not working properly in terms of constantly monitoring the market to keep up-to-date with and match the behaviours and trends of the consumers in the Jordanian environment. From the viewpoint of the researcher, the follow-up of the implementation of marketing plans that these companies adopted is poor due to the lack of experience in the marketing team. Also, economic challenges may be a factor that distracts customers from the services being provided. However, the main reason for this result seems to be poor operational efficiency and its impact on consumer trends. This finding agrees with Cova and Dallı (2009), who stated that the productive customer does not feel recognized anymore but rather used by a company when the symbolic and social benefits aren’t sufficient anymore for justifying consumer loyalty. This has even more relevance considering that firms

aren't prevalent in the market anymore; they must interact and, in some cases, compete with powerful consumer communities consumers that avoid company exploiting via protecting the value that is provided by their members and, sometimes, directly market it. Nevertheless, this does not completely eliminate the key role that IMC plays in enhancing operational efficiency, as mentioned above.

The results showed that there's no correlation between consumer trends and strategic orientation. This is in line with the result for the above-mentioned hypothesis because strategic orientation is an important factor in completing, following up and implementing marketing plans effectively. This result agrees with Grande, Madsen, and Borch (2011), who investigated the correlation amongst resources, entrepreneurial orientation, and performance in farm-based ventures. The results of their study showed no strong correlation between a firm's favourable location and its long-term performance. In this case as well, this result does not eliminate the role of IMC in influencing strategic orientation in the interaction of the consumer with the brand of Jordanian telecommunications companies, as demonstrated by the results of the testing of the third hypothesis.

According to the results, there is a strong positive relationship between integrated marketing organization and consumer trends. This is due to the interest of Jordanian telecommunications companies in providing adequate marketing information about what is going on in the marketing environment and its use in influencing consumer trends. This result underscores the key role of advertising in promoting information as a component of IMC, where advertising,

Finally, the study results showed the significant correlation between IMC and consumer trends. This due to the huge role that IMC plays through its dimensions in affecting consumer trends positively in telecommunications companies in Jordan. Providing good services at low prices, effective advertising, publicity and public relations, interactive marketing, sales promotion, and others, are all good tools to realize the wants and needs of consumers. Moreover, the companies under study are able to provide a consistent message to consumers about their services. This message contains elements that are able to convince the potential consumer of the benefits of the provided services. Moreover, through knowledge of purchasing behaviour and purchasing power in light of the challenges facing consumers in the Jordanian marketing environment, companies have been able to target specific consumer segments based on their respective purchasing power. This result agrees with Kliatchko and Schultz (2014), Reid, Luxton, and Mavondo (2005). As mentioned earlier, there is a role for demographic variables in the mediating IMC impact on the correlation between consumer trends and marketing effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the results, the researcher makes seven recommendations for the telecommunication companies in Jordan to consider:

- There is a need to activate operational efficiency in order to ensure good continuity in following up their marketing plans and to make sure that sufficient attention is paid to the needs and desires of consumers that are always changing in the light of the level of competition among these companies.
- There is a need to follow up changes in the marketing environment during the targeted marketing process in order to ensure that they increase or at least maintain their market share. To this end, the companies could adopt Porter strategies by focusing on achieving the highest quality at the lowest cost.

- The role of operational efficiency as an important element of marketing effectiveness requires a more professional field marketing team that can address a range of suggestions and complaints made by consumers in addition to their various wants and needs.
- There is a need to train marketing employees so that they can gain the required competencies to enable them to become a strategic partner by following up and controlling marketing plans and subsequently identifying gaps and filling them through appropriate interventions.

Suggestions for Further Study

Through the knowledge the researcher has gained from the large number of works on and around the topics of integrated marketing, consumer trends and effectiveness of marketing, and due to the constant modernization of the marketing environment, it is clear that IMC is a broad topic that is developing day by day. Hence no single research study can test IMC in its entirety and more research is needed. Moreover, this study, like any other, has some limitations which must be addressed. Therefore, the researcher suggests that researchers wishing to undertake further researches in this field consider the following issues:

- The effect of e-marketing on consumer trends. The marketing environment has become more virtual due to the growing ubiquity of social networking sites. The consumer is now influenced by the views of former consumers more than ever before because consumers talk about businesses via such platforms. Word-of-mouth marketing via the Internet channel can affect purchasing decisions and is thus an area of study worthy of further investigation.
- The impact of operational efficiency as an element of marketing effectiveness on purchasing decision making. To fully leverage marketing plans and follow-up requires effective marketing teams. The work of such teams can affect the behaviour of the consumer, so it is important to come up with ways in which to improve the professionalism of these teams.
- The role of marketing information systems in influencing consumer trends. The marketing information system includes marketing decision support systems as well as a very important component, namely, marketing intelligence.

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